
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5080

AN ACT CONCERNING DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY AND AUTHORIZING BOW AND ARROW HUNTING ON CERTAIN PRIVATE PROPERTY ON SUNDAYS.

SUMMARY:

This bill allows Sunday deer hunting with a bow and arrow on private land in overpopulated deer management zones, as the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) determines (see BACKGROUND). The hunting (1) must be in accordance with DEEP's wildlife management principles and practices and (2) cannot take place within 40 yards of a blazed (clearly marked) hiking trail. The hunter must have the private landowner's written permission to hunt there and carry it while hunting. By law, no one can hunt deer with a bow and arrow without first obtaining a DEEP bow and arrow permit.

A violation of the Sunday hunting law is a class D misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$250, imprisonment of up to 30 days, or both (CGS § 26-81). The bill eliminates a provision that makes possessing a bow and arrow outdoors on Sunday prima facie evidence of hunting in violation of the law.

The bill also authorizes the DEEP commissioner to allow landowners to take (kill) deer under certain specified conditions and in accordance with a plan he approves. By law, he already may allow municipalities, homeowner associations, or nonprofit land-holding organizations to take deer under the same conditions.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2014

TAKING OF DEER BY LANDOWNERS

The bill authorizes the DEEP commissioner to allow a landowner to take deer in a manner consistent with professional wildlife

management principles if the landowner can show to his satisfaction that the deer present a severe nuisance or are causing ecological damage. The landowner must (1) submit for the commissioner's approval a plan describing the extent and degree of the nuisance or damage and the proposed ways of taking the deer and (2) notify abutting landowners of the approved plan before implementing it. A landowner's taking of deer cannot involve the use of a snare or occur on Sundays.

A first violation of these provisions is punishable by a fine of between \$200 and \$500, imprisonment of between 30 days and six months, or both. Subsequent violations are punishable by a fine of between \$200 and \$1,000, imprisonment of up to one year, or both (CGS § 26-82(b)).

BACKGROUND

Deer Management Zones

DEEP has identified 13 deer management zones throughout the state, and currently estimates that 10 of the zones are overpopulated. DEEP considers a zone overpopulated if it has more than 20 deer per square mile.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 22 Nay 5 (03/21/2014)